

Livestock and Seed Programs
Agriculture Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Stop 0249, Room 209-S
Washington, DC 20250-0249

To whom it may concern:

I am commenting on your agency's proposal to introduce irradiated food in the National School Lunch Program. I am writing you today as a soon-to-be-mother who does not want her children exposed to irradiated food.

I am not comfortable or satisfied with the meat industry's propaganda, and I am further disillusioned with recent news articles about scientists not only from your agency, but from other government agencies who are hushed from going public with information on the negative human health impacts of industrial farming by the meat/agriculture industry. This to me is a disgrace, and it does a massive disservice to the taxpayers who are paying for this research – WE WANT TO KNOW if our health will be significantly impacted by industrial agricultural practices, and it is your job to provide U.S. citizens with such information and then to make those important decisions in order protect our health and our interests. My fear is that your agency is again bowing to the pressure of the industrial agriculture industry when it comes to the safety and long term sustainability of food irradiation.

I know of studies that show that consumption of food that has been irradiated can cause genetic damage in human cells. Have you looked into this? I would hope that you would. I believe that food that is raised/produced sustainably and responsibly does not require irradiation in order to ensure its safety. I feel that the corporate-industrial system of agriculture will lead us to poor quality of food (it already has) and poor quality care of handling food products. It is not right to make children pay the price for the problems in the industrial food system – the industry must clean up its act.

I ask that you take the time necessary to make a thoughtful decision now, rather than putting our children's health at unnecessary risk for expedience, which in the future, I fear your agency will very much regret. Children, more than anyone, depend on high quality food that offers the nutrition that is so essential for their developing minds and bodies, not food that is so questionable that it has to be irradiated in order to be safe for consumption. Please do not introduce irradiated food into the National School Lunch Program. If this filth gets into the public schools I will not allow my children to eat school lunches, I will be very vocal about this with my school district, and I will educate other parents so that they can make healthy choices for their children – after all, there are no labeling requirements in schools, so how would we really know what food has been exposed and to avoid? And what about low-income families who must participate in the school lunch program? Is it ethical to force irradiated foods into their diets knowing full

well that they have no choice in the matter? This is not a solution, it is a band aid. If the public really accepted the notion of food irradiation, the industry would not be trying so hard to push the stuff into schools, hospitals, nursing homes where there is no labeling requirement, and ultimately no choice. This one is up to the parents of the children who will be exposed to irradiated food, and this soon-to-be parent says NO WAY. Please reconsider your proposal-do not allow irradiated food in children's lunches.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Jeni von Reuter
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